

**SIX**  
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**ON**  
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**TWENTIETH SERIES**

*As Presented By*

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## FATE? OR FREE WILL?

One of the most intriguing subjects for debate throughout the centuries has been this matter of Fate and Free Will. Does man have free will to choose the pattern of his life, or is he bound by forces beyond his control? Is man free to do as he pleases, or is his life governed by something we hardly can identify, something we call Fate?

There is within each one of us an inner voice which says in no uncertain terms "I AM FREE!" And this voice we cannot disregard, for it is an essential part of our being. But in spite of that fact, there are times when some of the most important decisions of our lives seem to be taken right out of our hands - engineered by a power beyond our control. And so once again we are faced with the age old question. Fate? Or Free Will? Can Theosophy provide us with a clue to this baffling mystery?

Perhaps one of our difficulties lies in the fact that we think of fate and free will as opposites. But are they really opposites? Could it be that by our free will we make our fate?

It has been said that the book of Life has many chapters. Since man now stands at about the mid-point in his cyclic period of evolution, according to Theosophy, we might say that the story of our lives today forms perhaps the middle chapter. Is it not possible, then, that the conditions of our lives which seem so compelling today, are in reality the aftermath of what happened in earlier chapters? Perhaps what seems to us now as inexplicable Fate is but the result of causes we ourselves originated long ago.

There are two factors we must take into consideration if we are fully to understand what Theosophy has to say on this matter. First of all, the purpose of life is to evolve human beings capable of manifesting every conceivable spiritual potential. Man is said to be an immortal soul on a journey of discovery. Unaware of his essential divinity, he goes contrary to Nature's laws again and again. He battles many imaginary demons, often of his own creation. But all the time he is learning. Though his use of free will often gets him into trouble, it is through those very experiences that he develops confidence in his ability to meet life. He



becomes a self-conscious being - able to act, to feel, and to think effectively.

This is all part of a planned evolutionary Scheme. Every human being is part of the Plan. And every human being must move along that Path. As we glance through other chapters in the book of Life, we find individuals who are far in advance of their fellows. They have evolved not only mental powers but spiritual powers. They have awakened superior faculties. They have made the discovery of their divine potentials, and life is leading them to the full and perfect expression of those faculties. Is this the goal of all mankind? COULD THIS BE OUR FATE?

Man's progress is controlled by laws of Nature. If he defies them by his free will, he creates obstacles. If he works with those laws, living according to their principles, his progress is rapid. Man is being groomed for adeptship - he must learn to master life - and if by his free will he hinders his progress, Nature's laws will swing him back into the Path. Again and again he may turn aside, but every time he must return. Eventually he learns that the only way he can avoid what seems to be a cruel Fate, bringing suffering and frustration, is to use his will in accordance with Nature's laws. Then his life moves according to Divine Plan.

The second suggestion which Theosophy has to offer is this. Within the Plan, man has free will. As Annie Besant once wrote: The Will of the Creator "compels all to travel along the path of evolution, and still leaves to each to choose his method of going..." \* When each soul comes into incarnation, he brings with him all his own qualities, his own aptitudes, his own strength and capacities - all the result of former experiences. In other words, each one of us brings with us our own ability or our own inability to meet any and all situations which life may present.

But each soul must experience limitation. It is bound by the body which it must use. It is bound by the walls of habitual thinking which prevent the personality from recognizing and using what the soul has to offer. But those limitations are not imposed by a cruel world or an unjust God -- they are of his own making. As souls, we have created our own lack of understanding in the past. But within the great Plan of the evolving Universe we are free to make use of

every opportunity to increase our wisdom in the present, and to move beyond those limits. A friend of mine put it well when he said: "I recognize that there is an ultimate purpose and that none of us can escape the inevitable working out of the laws of Nature. That is probably my Fate. But I also accept the responsibility that as a soul I have the right of free will to determine the way I shall move toward that ultimate outcome, step by step at my own pace."

We might say that each one of us has a journey to make. But we can make that journey in comfort or distress. The choice is ours.

Suppose that some obligation of normal living requires you to make a trip across the country. You recognize this as something you cannot for the moment escape, so, for purposes of analogy, we call it your Fate. But the way you will make the journey is up to you. You can go by train, plane, or private car. You can even hitch hike if you choose. In other words, you have free choice within limits; and your choice will determine the conditions which you will meet along the way.

So with life. It, too, is a journey. It is an obligation we cannot escape. Even suicide will not release us from that obligation. In fact, it only adds to our difficulties and delays our progress, for it deprives us of the vehicle which is our present mode of travel. It will take time and energy for the soul to provide another. And so if we will accept our obligation and buckle down to life as it is, acknowledging that we ourselves have brought about the present conditions by our own use of free will in the past, then we are in a position to work constructively toward improving the future part of our journey.

We have within us a still small voice which tries to warn us against doing those things which have resulted in unhappiness in the past. Here again we have choice of action: We can follow the suggestion of that voice of conscience, or we can disregard it entirely. But if we do disregard it we will have to suffer the consequences. And sooner or later we shall come to realize that we are free only within limits. There is inexorable law governing not only our own lives, but all life; and our greatest freedom lies in cooperating with that law. We must coordinate our human will with



## Divine Will.

Here Theosophy offers another clue. For it explains that Will is a primary power, an attribute of the Creator. Without Will there would have been no Universe. Man himself would not be in existence. And since every human being is a son of God and contains within himself all the potentialities of his Creator, this power of Divine Will is inherent in each one of us. It is one of those spiritual potentials we must learn to use. But do we normally listen for its direction?

As personalities we have a tendency to react quickly to outer stimuli. Our actions are for the most part governed by what people do or say, and by the pressures of our environment. We are aroused so quickly into action that we do not take time to consult that inner voice. We often say that we have the right to do as we choose - but we might pause a moment to question: WHO is doing the choosing? Surely not the real self, when we let our desires lead us this way and that, tossed about by every emotional breeze that blows. If we would act as intelligent beings, with free will to determine our actions - and therefore our destiny - our reactions must be stimulated from within, not from without. We must make use of that inner Will, the very source of our power.

It is rather significant that the definition of fate, as given by Webster, includes the word "will"! He defines fate as "that principle, or determining cause or will, by which things in general...come to be as they are..." Fate, then, is brought about by the will of someone. One is the result of the other - THEY ARE NOT OPPOSITES!

As we consider the various points which Theosophy has put before us, would it not seem that it is the will of ourselves as evolving beings which creates the conditions of our lives? By our own Will, we determine our own Fate!

That inner voice which cries "I AM FREE" can be depended upon. For it is the voice of our innermost Self at the wheel of our Fate - guiding our lives by the divine power of the Will. And when that Will is freed there will be no longer the question of free will versus fate. For by our own Will we will have our Fate securely in our own hands.

\* Study in Consciousness - page 267.

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF LIFE

It is obvious that all forms have one thing in common, and that thing is life. That is shared by every living creature, as is the air we breathe, the light and darkness of day and night, the cold of winter and the warmth of the sun in summer. Life is the compelling power behind all things throughout all kingdoms of nature. All things exist primarily for the growth and expression of life. Life unfolds its divine powers as it works through the various forms of things and beings which grow more sensitive and more expressive as the powers of life expand within them.

The word "kingdom" was originally "kindom", which meant that all life within each kingdom was of kin, "akin". In the first chapter of Genesis we learn that God first made the earth, the mineral kingdom. Then the earth brought forth the grass and trees and fruits of every kind, the vegetable kingdom. This was followed by the animals, and later man appeared upon the scene. Then God sent His Holy angels and Divine messengers to teach man about the Spiritual Kingdom.

We are told in an ancient Eastern scripture that "God's life stirs in the mineral, dreams in the vegetable, awakens in the animal, becomes self-conscious in man, and universally conscious as man attains perfection." In both those accounts, the story of the evolution of life, unfolding its powers through the diversity of form, is briefly and beautifully told. We shall also see God's economy of effort behind the dependancy of each kingdom of life upon the other, and in the way each unconsciously helps the other to unfold.

Usually we think of the things we call inanimate as being lifeless. We should rather think of them as having less-life, for there is no such thing as dead matter. The imperishable life of God permeates every atom of His world. It is a matter of the quantity and the quality of His life which is being expressed through the form; the lower and cruder the form, the less can be expressed through it. It has been proven by our scientists that the life in metals and plants responds to stimuli in a manner similar to the response in animals and men, though in a far less degree.

The first actual demonstrations of such responses were made by Dr. Chandra Bose of India before an audience of scien-



tists in London. He closed his lecture with the declaration that he had only proved experimentally the great truth which his ancestors had proclaimed thousands of years ago, when they chanted from the Vedas, the Hindu Scriptures: "There is only one life, though men name it variously."

The sleeping life of the mineral receives terrific impacts of all kinds, such impacts as earthquakes and volcanic action. These cause responses. In addition to the violent impacts of nature, this sleeping life of the mineral is stirred by man when he digs deep into the earth to mine the many valuable ores which are later fashioned into various articles used by him in his daily life.

From the sleeping life of the mineral, we come to the dreaming life of the vegetable. Here we find greater powers of response, greater sensitivity to heat and cold, sun and shade, and so on, and also the power to build definite forms. We are much more aware of the life in this vegetable kingdom. We can definitely see the forms grow and, as we say, live and die. Man, by improving the conditions for growth in this kingdom for his own use, has also unconsciously stimulated the life which is expanding within the vegetable forms.

In the next kingdom, life is no longer sleeping or dreaming, but is awake. So we find forms that can move about on the surface of the earth, in the water and in the air - animals. The word "animal" comes from "animate", "moving". Here the life is more free, no longer rooted to one place. When the power of motion is enjoyed by a living creature, its opportunity of gathering experience increases tremendously, for now it brings itself into contact with outer objects instead of being limited to those which come to it. So its "awareness" develops more rapidly. Animals coming into close and affectionate contact with human beings expand this awareness still more rapidly and develop intelligence, devotion, and affection to a marked degree. People who love animals or have charge of them know that this is true.

By studying the lower kingdoms, we see that life, as it unfolds, needs ever more complex and expressive forms through which to express its increasing powers. So now we come to the Human Kingdom. Here life becomes a riddle, for man is unique. Each human being, unlike other beings, is a self-conscious soul. His form has evolved age after age, a gift

from the lower kingdoms for his use as a human, but he is a spiritual intelligence functioning in a physical body- a son of God. Because all men are children of God, they are KIN to each other.

There is a Brotherhood of all Life from the dust beneath our feet to the sun shining in the heavens above our heads. The brotherhood of man is a fact in nature, and, as human beings, we are bound together with the strongest possible ties. The greatest of these being God's love for us, His children. If we believe that all men are sons of God, they must be brothers in the flesh as well as in the spirit.

Spiritually we do recognize our kinship, our oneness with all life. If we could see ourselves with the eyes of the soul, we would only be aware of our similarities and our love for each other, which is real and true. In the world of the spirit, barriers of race, religion, language and sex do not exist. With the eyes of the soul, we see ourselves and each other not "in a glass darkly" as we do through the eyes of the flesh, but "face to face", as it were, in the shining light of truth and wisdom.

Older souls see and express more God-like powers than do younger souls, their younger brothers. But no matter how young the soul may be, its expression as a soul is a consciousness ever growing towards a greater perfection. Our Lord Christ said: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven.." I am sure He would never have given us such a command unless He knew that it could be carried out. The brotherhood of man has a deep spiritual basis. Its practical realization constitutes the first and last word on the path of spiritual enlightenment. Brotherliness for all is an indispensable condition of spiritual development.

There are many conceptions of brotherhood. Some are based upon mutual interests, some upon race affinity, some upon class, some upon similarity of occupation. But all these things are limitations. The theosophical conception of brotherhood is based upon the simple yet profound fact that all that lives is of common origin, that all are equally children of the Creator. The very word "brotherhood" connotes identity of blood and inequality of development; so it represents exactly the link which exists between all creatures in the universe; identity of essential life and differences



in the stages reached in the manifestation of that life. We are one in our origin, one in the method of our evolution and one in our goal. The intellectual recognition of this brotherhood plus the endeavor to live it practically is an intense stimulation to the spiritual nature of man. To live it even to a small extent, cleanses the heart and purifies the vision. To live it perfectly would be to let the pure shining of the God which is within each one of us, irradiate us even as a light shines through flawless glass.

As man grows in spiritual wisdom and lives the Christ-like life, he reaches that point where he can pour out spiritual strength, peace, and love into all who are in need of help. He then realizes for himself the oneness of all life, and becomes a brother to all that lives. Eventually he enters that Great Brotherhood of "just men made perfect." He has then gained the Divine power to help the world.

## HOW WIDE IS YOUR CIRCLE?

In these days we are all more or less familiar with the word "atom", although very few of us have any conception of the actual composition of an atom, or of its actual potential when it can be harnessed by man for purposes of peace.

For over three thousand years it was believed that the atom was a solid unit, the ultimate indivisible particle of matter. Democritus, in the middle of the fourth century B.C., presented the hypothesis that such atoms formed "bricks" of which the universe and all things in the universe were built. But it was not until the last century that the actual existence of the atom was established. And now, in the present century, scientists tell us that it is but a storehouse of electrical energy!

Philosophers the world over have debated the manner in which life and matter and energy came together to form a living universe. The Creation has always been a mystery. We are told that in the beginning "the earth was without form and void, and darkness lay upon the face of the waters." We are told also that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Students of the great religions of the world find the Creation Story described in various ways - but all can be symbolized by the Circle with the Point in the center; the Circle representing the circumference or area of manifestation; and the Point, that primal creative force welling up from within and filling the entire universe with living energy.

This symbol may be said to indicate the opinion of modern as well as of occult thought, since scientific research now establishes the fact that there is actually nothing in the universe but the energy of the atom, manifesting in different ways to produce different effects. And so it would seem that the ancients were right when they said that the universe and everything within it was built of atoms! For whether we consider the planes of physical science or ascend to the highest level of consciousness, we find that the material of which those planes are composed is the energy of atoms - virgin matter vivified by a Creative Force.

We have all heard the occult maxim "As above, so below". Man then, might be considered as the Point within his own Circle



of manifestation - his own small field of consciousness filled with divine energy whose force he is continually using. Man is the center of his own little universe. And just as the larger area of manifested life is filled with atoms ensouled with the divine Life of the Logos, so man's circle of influence is filled with divine atoms ensouled by his own consciousness - his to use, to control, to expand.

Dr. Annie Besant tells us in her book "Study in Consciousness" that Spirit cannot manifest without form of some kind; that the atoms of every plane from the densest physical to the finest spiritual have three determining factors. She says "The formation of the atom has three stages. First the fixing of the limit within which the ensouling life shall vibrate. This limiting and fixing of the wave-length of the vibration is technically called its 'divine measure' - this gives to the atoms of each plane their distinctive peculiarity...As the eye is so constituted that it is able to respond to vibrations within only a certain range, so is each type of atom, by its constitution, able to respond to vibrations within a certain range. One plane is called the plane of mind-stuff - because the measure of its atoms make their dominant response that which enables the individual to think. Another is called the plane of desire-stuff - because the measure of its atoms make their dominant response that of desire or emotion. So every type of atom has its own peculiar power of response, determined by its own measure of vibration."

"Then secondly," according to Dr. Besant, "the Logos marks out the lines which determine the shape of the atom, the fundamental axes of growth - the nearest analogy to these are the axes of the crystals. Thirdly, by the measure of the vibration and the angular relation of the axes of growth with each other, the size and form of the atom is determined." Thus in every atom we have its "measure" of vibration - or fixing of the wave-length; second, its fundamental axes of growth - or direction in which it will expand and grow; and thirdly, the size and form of the surface as determined by the measure of the vibration and the relation of the axes of growth.

Now if you consider these facts in relation to the maxim "As above, so below," will it not follow that the atoms whose energy forms that circle of consciousness which is your

field of manifestation, must also have those three characteristics - and that you, as the creator, the point within the circle, you are the one who can determine the "measure" of your own sphere of influence? You also can determine its direction of growth, and its extent and its form. Within the circle of your own life, you too are a latent Logos.

Let us go to Theosophy to find out what type of material you will have to use. Physical substance of course - your actions in the physical world will influence all those around you. Then there will be your use of the physical atom itself, and this includes not only the food you take into your body which constantly changes the conditions of the physical cells and so determines the refinement of the body, but also your consideration of that major issue of the present era - atomic power...will it be used to serve a constructive or a destructive purpose?

And your circle will be filled with other than physical atoms. For there are the finer substances of the desire and thought worlds in that consciousness which is yours to use. You are sending out wave after wave of influence, for good or for evil, helping or hindering those whom you contact in daily living. You cannot walk down the street without affecting the lives of individuals who do not even know you, as the thoughts and emotions of your own circle touch the circles of those around you.

No man lives to himself alone. His circle is not his exclusive property, stretching unchanging and immovable about a stationary point. The direction of his life changes and grows according to the way he looks at things and events and people, and the way he reacts to them. His circle is constantly being shaped by the opinions he accepts, and by the emotional environment to which he responds. Isolationism is even less possible for the individual than it is for a nation. The vibratory power within his circle extends far beyond its circumference, for it is not a wall of steel enclosing him and shutting him away from the world.

When we realize that every moment of our lives we are creating in that miniature universe of our own circle, we begin to see the need for discrimination. What qualities do we really wish to cultivate there? The same laws apply as in the physical world. If we would grow a daisy, we must plant



the seed of a daisy - if we would grow an oak tree, we must plant an acorn. If we would have the experience of brotherhood, we must plant the seeds of brotherhood. We must feel it and live it - we must develop sympathy and compassion, tolerance and understanding, kindness and gentleness and helpfulness.

In order to have friends, one must be friendly; in order to experience kindness, one must be kind; in order to know Divine Love, one must be loving. Spiritual growth is not an addition to that consciousness within, but an unfolding and expanding of powers latent in us from the very beginning. It is that welling up of Life from within the circle itself. It is the Law of Life that all things grow from the center; and in accordance with that Law, consciousness unfolds from that center which is the real Self, reaches out to the periphery of the circle and extends beyond, spiraling on to the heights of spiritual aspiration. It is ever widening, ever expanding, ever ascending.

Our circle touches the circles of other human beings - our influence spreads and permeates all the life around us, even as water colors spread and blend on a receptive medium. If we would widen that circle, let us remember the words of a great mystic: "Lift up the foot of thy love, and step toward that state called Perfect." Make that circle all-inclusive, so that within its periphery the Will and the Wisdom and the Love of the Logos will ray upon the world those divine qualities.

According to our creative use of the energy in our own little circle, we approach an ever greater and greater beauty of expression. And, within that circle, the changing consciousness which is our creation, spirals to an ever higher degree of perfection.

## IMMORTALITY

Does life continue after death? Who can prove it? Arguments cannot prove immortality--even though the heart yearns for it, and the soul hungers for it. In the minds of many there is a fear of immortality. Perhaps this dates from the deep-seated error that God is a vengeful God. The Life that we have was given to us by God. Every moment we live, we are in the hands of God. Each night we lie down to sleep and pass into a state of unconsciousness, content in the knowledge that we will awake on the morrow. And yet when it comes to asking questions about God's creation, we are afraid.

There are some people who believe man to be the highest product of evolution. They say that there is nothing existing in the universe higher than man. Nobody understands the universe better than he does. And he could have made it himself, if he had been called in on it. Fortunately, there is no evidence that God has called upon any mere mortal to help operate the universe. Consequently, the cosmos continues in good order without mishap or disaster.

To believe that man on the earth is the highest existence, is incredible. Science has made all this appear unreasonable. We know that there are other worlds in space. There may be beings on these other worlds. And how do we know that those are all the beings that exist? Science has shown us a universe of law and order, of world upon world. Our conceptions are benumbed when we try to penetrate into space and realize that there is no end--that there is world upon world to apparent infinity. And everything acts according to Law. The same Law, and the same chemistry and physics are found in the most distant stars. The universe is ONE. Nothing that man has ever created has ever approached Life in beauty or importance. Life and Nature are related. Everything that exists is related, because it all emanates from God--it is all part of Creation.

There are many differences of opinion about immortality. This can be traced to the various conceptions which people hold of the universe. The Materialists say that the universe and all things in it was derived from matter and motion. Consciousness was produced out of matter and energy. And when the body dies, consciousness ceases--that is the end.



The Eastern Teaching holds that Mind is back of all the work of evolution. This whole process of evolution is caused by Mind striving, struggling and pressing forward toward expression and liberation of the confined Spirit, which is behind the Mind. While the religions of the world are diversified, and many of them seem to be contradictory, they all have their root in the common conception of one Creator. They are based on the belief also that there is life after death.

Theosophy teaches that Life and Matter are inseparable. Nature knows no such separation. Light, heat, consciousness, mentality--all are varying expressions of the one Eternal Energy. But different manifestations of one thing--just as various fruits are the products of one soil. Matter is the lowest expression of Life. When Life expresses itself in form, we call it matter. When it shows forth as consciousness, we call it life. When that consciousness manifests itself through a lower type, as in the animal kingdom, we name it instinct. When it expresses itself through the human form, we call it intelligence. And when it reaches its highest level, we know it as spirituality. But always it is the One Life--varying in its manifestation according to the medium of its expression.

Theosophy further tells us that there is an intelligent first cause. That Consciousness and God are One--has always existed--is eternal. Matter and energy are emanations from God. And all degrees of intelligence are expressions of His life. It is Consciousness which creates forms from matter. Does it not then seem more logical to think that eternal consciousness has fashioned the forms that fill the world than to believe that eternal matter created consciousness and man?

It is difficult to see how there was never a beginning, yet it is quite impossible to think of an end--for the mind at once asks, "What after that?" Tennyson put well that limitation of the finite mind when he wrote, "It is hard to believe in God; it is harder not to believe in Him." In the heart of every normal person there is a longing to continue to live. The soul itself loves life. The real personality that each of us possesses understands that immortality is a fact. And whether we believe or disbelieve that life continues after death, as we observe nature we become aware of a cyclic order of existence in the universe. Season

follows upon season, and night follows day in rhythmic sequence. We cannot imagine a night that did not return to day, or a winter that did not become another spring.

We are living under God's Law. We came into life in accordance with that law, and in harmony with it we shall depart from this life.

In this great Rhythm of Life with which we may identify ourselves, the Immortal Self has alternating periods of rest and action--an in-breathing and an out-breathing of the pulse of Life. This Immortal Self, which is our Higher Nature, expresses itself through the personality, our lower nature, in the thoughts, desires and actions of our everyday living. After a period of time, say a life-span, rest and refreshment are needed, so that the Self may review the experiences of earth-life. This rest period is what we call death--death of the physical body. Thoreau expressed it as "A pause in the melody of Life". The particular use of death is that it allows a period for the assimilation of our earth experiences. It is a harvest time of the Soul. When the molding of our experiences into new capacities and powers is completed, then the Ego, or Soul, is ready to return into incarnation again in order to gather more experiences. Thus life unfolds or evolves through a series of rhythmic and recurring patterns.

Fear and superstition are the great fetters that stand in the way of our accepting a belief in immortality. There is a common terror of death because humanity has long regarded almost all of the problems of life with superstitious dread. It seems to have made death a pet horror. The only way of casting off these fetters of fear is by knowledge and intelligent understanding. If we have the assurance all around us of continuity in the Divine order of things, then we should no longer look upon death as a dismal and dreadful end, but as the opening into a larger life. And we should know that we were not made for nothing. No dogma of the immortality of the soul would be needed, for it is inherent in the nature of things. There seems always to have been the inner knowledge that life does persist. It is a knowledge that sometimes comes stealing upon the doubter and shocks him back to sober thought. Perhaps it is this knowledge that makes the greatest doubters most fearful of death.



There is a certain degree of faith within all normal mortals. That faith may not manifest itself in the general course of events. It may require a crisis to unveil it. But at intervals throughout our lives, no matter how difficult our tasks may seem, we do sometimes pause to inquire about the nature of life and about the possibilities of immortality. No matter how engrossed we may be in our daily labors, no matter how thoroughly enmeshed we may be in world affairs, there come fleeting and sometimes very impressive impulses and inspirations which cause us to say, "The day of death approaches. What about life after death?"

## THE HIDDEN SIDE OF LIFE

From time to time some particular incident calls to our attention the fact that there is life after death and that we eventually are reborn into new physical bodies. The story of Bridey Murphy has turned our thoughts in that direction. But this is by no means the only event which has startled us into the realization that we live in more than a physical world.

Back in the early 1870's, for instance, the spiritualistic phenomena at the Eddy farmhouse in Vermont were the sensation of the day. The affair was carefully investigated by every possible means. New York newspapers sent their best reporters to cover the story, and copies of some of the issues sold as high as a dollar apiece. Many people were brought face to face with the fact that there is a hidden side of life, and that this physical experience we call life is not the whole of our existence.

There are people living today who sense this invisible part of our world; and many philosophers of all ages have recorded instances of extra-sensory experiences. These are too numerous and too well authenticated to be classed as mere coincidence or phantasy. Some 19th century scientists - Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge for example - documented evidence of psychic research, and in our own century, scientists of repute have begun to investigate these matters. Perhaps the best known published results are those of Dr. J. B. Rhine of Duke University who, with his associates, has made extensive studies of the telepathic and clairvoyant faculties of man. The results obtained under test conditions cannot possibly be attributed to chance. We must accept the fact that man does possess faculties other than physical.

In 1950 our interest in the unknown was again challenged by a book which told the story of Edgar Cayce. Deeply religious from childhood and with a sincere desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ and be a healer, Cayce himself was in need of physical treatment. Submitting to hypnosis, he entertained the suggestion that he diagnose his own case. To the surprise of even the hypnotist, this was successfully accomplished and the affliction cured. From that time on, Edgar Cayce gave his life to the work of healing thousands



of men and women. For this he accepted no payment.

Relaxing in a self-imposed trance, he would investigate the cause and cure of any condition suggested to him. Astonishing results followed. Some thirty thousand cases are on record which include dated letters of inquiry and appeals for help as well as letters of gratitude for healing. These records are open to examination and have established documentary evidence for the validity of the phenomena. They form the subject matter of the book "Many Mansions" by Gina Germinara, Ph.D., and "There is a River" by Thomas Sugrue.

The most astonishing feature of the work of Edgar Cayce came as the result of a single remark made under hypnosis. His listeners were startled to hear the words: "You were once a monk". This led to further questions which revealed conditions of a former incarnation. Subsequent questioning brought replies of a philosophic nature. The solar system, Cayce said, provided a cycle of experience for the evolving soul, and man alternated experiences on earth with experiences in other realms of consciousness. Disease in this life period was often the result of actions in previous incarnations. He not only identified specific causes from previous lives, but outlined corrective measures. These included not only physical remedies but the need for some new mental outlook. Cures followed. And so the hypothesis of reincarnation was brought before the world with tremendous impact.

In 1956 "The Search for Bridey Murphy" held our attention. This book, written by Morey Bernstein, relates the story of a housewife living in Pueblo, Colorado, who, under hypnosis, recalled incidents from a previous incarnation dating back some 150 years. The book has sold thousands of copies; many newspapers throughout the country have run condensations, Paramount Pictures has made it into a movie, and N.B.C. has negotiated television rights. The emergence of Bridey Murphy has stirred the thought and imagination of a good many people.

Now what is the theosophical perspective on all of this? First of all, it was Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, one of the Founders of The Theosophical Society and a distinguished reporter on the New York Daily Graphic, who covered the investigation at the Eddy homestead in 1874. Both he and Madame

Blavatsky, co-Founder of the Society, knew of the conditions of after-death life; and "The Secret Doctrine", published in 1888, covers all phases of man's existence both in this and in other worlds. The hypothesis of reincarnation is highly substantiated. The logic and rationale of reincarnation as a philosophical principle of complete reasonableness is accepted today by many people. It was taught in early Christianity, is entirely compatible with Bible teachings, and is a major tenet of other great religions.

However, there are a number of things which Theosophy would have to say about the various phenomena by means of which reincarnation has been brought to our attention. The matter of hypnosis is one. It has been used by psychiatrists in various ways to probe for the causes of mental illness. Used by a competent physician for diagnosing and curing disease, hypnosis can be a valuable aid to mankind. But as an entertainment feature, or as a thing of mere curiosity, it is definitely to be avoided. Under hypnosis an individual is not only subject to the suggestion of the hypnotist, but is also wide open to undesirable influences of the unseen world which may cause untold damage to his own invisible bodies since his own will is no longer in control of the situation.

Let us find out what may happen when a person is hypnotised. "The Secret Doctrine" by Madame Blavatsky states, in effect, that if such a person were to be examined clairvoyantly, we would discover that the principle of Higher Mind, which is the faculty of intelligence in man - that principle which raises him above the animal kingdom - is paralyzed. Because of this, his higher spiritual principles, including his will, can no longer operate. He is under the control of his lower nature. Man's power of will is his highest spiritual faculty. It is one expression of his inherent divinity, and to relinquish this faculty, even temporarily, without real cause, is never advisable.

Now as to the story of Bridey Murphy - the facts revealed under hypnosis may be valid. It is entirely possible that the ego, known in this incarnation as Ruth Simmons, may have lived in Ireland as Bridey. And it is entirely possible that the sub-conscious mind of Ruth Simmons can bring to light incidents of a former incarnation - for all events of our entire series of lives are stored as soul memory. It



is said that facts were checked as carefully as possible and some investigators report that a remarkable number of Bridey's statements have been corroborated. But normally a soul does not return to earth-life so soon. There are, however, exceptions to the rule - and Bridey may be one of them.

But Theosophy explains that the after-death life is extremely important to the soul. It is an integral part of the reincarnating cycle. We all know that proper development of the physical body requires assimilation of the food we eat. Just so, for proper development of the soul, there must be opportunity to assimilate the experiences of earth-life. It is the non-physical part of the cycle of incarnation which provides this opportunity. Experience is gradually changed into faculty, making possible the greater release of spiritual potentials. The soul is then better able to carry on its work and to make the most of the next period of earth life. The purpose of repeated incarnations is to give the soul the required experience through which it can grow into a greater maturity and wisdom and eventually free itself from the cycle of birth and death.

Also it should be noted that at death the soul does not normally remain in the astral world for nearly 60 years as Bridey is reported to have done, for long before that time has elapsed, it would have moved on to the heaven world, quite removed from the details of earth existence.

Every one of these occurrences brings evidence of non-physical existence. It provides a springboard from which our minds can dive into the ocean of knowledge concerning the more complete nature of man.

The facts of man's nature and existence other than physical are of vital importance, and in each of the rather sensational incidents already referred to we find signposts pointing the way to avenues of truth. Theosophy is a synthesis of these various approaches. It brings out the essential bits of truth in each and, by developing them in proper perspective, presents a composite picture of life.

It is this picture of man's existence in visible and invisible worlds which can help greatly to bring a new sense of order, meaning, and consistent purpose into our confused, fragmented living of today.

## PERSONALITY PLUS

When we say that someone has "personality plus", what do we actually mean? We usually think of a certain quality of vibrancy, and we apply the term to those individuals whose lives express that vibrant quality, who always seem to put more of themselves into everything they do than does the average person.

We go through life meeting dozens of people who make no particular impression upon us, good people going about their work in their own way, often accomplishing a great deal in life; but, though our paths may cross and re-cross, our lives are not noticeably changed by that contact. And then, all of a sudden, we meet someone whose influence is a seemingly tangible thing - and we say: "There's someone with personality plus!" What does this "plus" consist of? It is not easy to define the source of that vibrant quality, but it is obviously an ability to project, perhaps unconsciously, some inner force. Is this ability something that all of us can cultivate? And what is that inner force? Is it something that already exists in each of us; but that we have not projected to others because we have hardly sensed it ourselves?

As we try to find answers to these questions, we might consider first of all some of the qualities we associate with "personality plus". I think we all probably agree that it is an expression of vitality. In contrast is the individual who acts in a manner we can only describe as "anemic", meaning not the actual lack of red corpuscles but the listless, disinterested person who does not have this "plus" quality. It demands a certain vitality--a strength, an active expression of power.

Another quality that we associate with someone who has personality plus is a real interest in people. The person who is a recluse, who stays pretty much to himself and doesn't include other people in his interests, doesn't have this particular "plus" quality. It seems to be a characteristic of the individual who is always giving something of himself to others, who seems to be reaching out with his own consciousness drawing something from everyone, but at the same time giving something to everyone. It is a reciprocal action. Such a person makes you feel that you share some experience of life with him, that your problem is as important to him



as his own, and that if you could just tap the source of that plus quality which you feel in him, your own problems would vanish into thin air. Here again we wonder: is this faculty of identifying ourselves with the interests of others a potential in each one of us - a power we have not been "exercising", so to speak?

We have now two expressions of that mysterious something we call personality plus - vitality, and an interest in people. What other quality is characteristic? Must we not also include an eager mind? Is not this vibrant aliveness the expression of a mind that is open to new ideas? We do not find it in those individuals whose minds are closed with prejudice - who give the impression that they have exhausted the possibilities of life. They have drawn a shell around themselves and have little personality to share with anyone else. But the individual with "personality plus" is not enclosed in a shell of his own making. He is constantly breaking through every shell, gaining new drive. He is not living in the past but is looking to the future; and he is always ready to act in the present. He finds life intriguing, and his active interest in meeting its challenge never fails to draw response of some kind from those around him. Perhaps it is his readiness to meet life which impresses us the most, for by it we ourselves are stimulated to face the challenges of our own lives.

These three qualities, then, we associate with the expression of "personality plus" - an open, eager mind; an interest in other people and an instinctive willingness to give attention to the needs and interests of others; and a certain outpouring of vitality - aliveness.

Now it is rather interesting, as we look back over those qualities, to discover that they correspond perfectly with the three divisions of what Theosophy calls the "personality of man" - for man, as a personality, functions in three aspects. He is a thinking, feeling and physically active individual. According to theosophical teachings, as the soul prepares for physical existence, he surrounds himself first with material from the mental world which becomes his mental body - and that is quite obviously the instrument with which he thinks. The mental body is made up of what is sometimes called mind-stuff, since it clothes the mind of man which, as we have seen, can be either open or closed to new ideas. The soul

next takes on a body of emotional matter - or astral matter as it is called in theosophical literature - and this is the vehicle through which each personality may express affection, sympathy. And then we have next the physical body which the soul uses during his period on earth - and that is the body which expresses a greater or lesser degree of vitality.

Every human being has these three bodies to use. Every human being can think and feel and act, but we know that no two individuals make use of these three vehicles of expression in the same degree. That person whom we describe as having personality plus is, without doubt, making use of his personality just a little more completely than other persons.

According to Theosophy, the soul of man is actually a projection of Spirit. If the soul can project its power into the personality, you have Spirit PLUS personality. The soul has capacities far greater than those of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies; but in the earlier incarnations, while he is still a "young soul", the individual does not realize this fact. He is not yet aware of the powers of the Spirit. Not only this, but he seldom lives up to the full potentials of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies, and consequently his personality does not fully express itself. But there comes a time when some experience of life, perhaps, makes him realize that there is an advantage in gaining that "plus" quality - that there are powers which he could tap if he just knew how - that he does have the potential of greater expression within himself. That is the moment when the soul is able to arouse his rather lethargic personality. When that happens, that individual actually comes in contact with a source of power much greater than he has ever used before. And he at once faces a new problem. For when that power begins to flow through the individual, he may find it harder to control than a high-powered car with which he is unfamiliar. Every faculty becomes stimulated. He thinks more rapidly, his emotions are expressed more completely, and his physical body is stimulated to greater activity. He is the man at the wheel, and he must be wise enough to guide those expressions of himself into proper lanes. The "plus" quality, though desirable, needs a great deal of conscious control.

We sometimes think of these powers of the Spirit as something vague, far removed from normal existence. Actually they



are the source of all our potential. The reason they seem so far away is because our attention has been centered over-much at the physical level. But we are told, however, that every faculty of the personality is actually a reflection of some aspect of Spirit. The power of love, for instance, is a reflection of that type of spiritual power which is sometimes called "buddhic" or intuitional. A person who attains to intuitional consciousness of life is said to be in a state of at-one-ness with all life. Therefore it is easy to see that whenever the personality can bring even a very small amount of that influence into his daily living, he will experience moments when his consciousness is extended to include the feelings of others - when he will instinctively give of himself to help others - which is the basis of that "plus" quality.

It is a well known fact that mind and emotions influence physical health. Mental confusion and the uncontrolled expenditure of emotional energy can drain vitality more quickly than physical labour. When there is conflict between the mind and emotions, the physical body will always suffer. So it is obvious that when these two parts of the personality are brought into more harmonious relationship and expression by the flow of spiritual power, the physical body is able to take in greater vitality.

With this knowledge of the nature of man, we can consciously work to add a spiritual "plus" to the normal personality. Those powers are potential in each of us. Realizing that we have them, trying to understand them, trying to open ourselves to their influence cannot fail to make our lives much richer. But in order to demonstrate "personality plus", we have to let those powers shine through us so that others will feel their influence. It is when we are no longer the center of our own circle, but when we express these powers, sharing them gladly and willingly with other people, stimulating others to an awareness of their own potentials, that our lives take on that vibrancy which means - PERSONALITY PLUS.

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